

Kansas church's counterprotest condemns homosexuality



KEVIN KRECK, THE GAZETTE

Officer Daryl Johnson, second from left, speaks with a representative of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, who declined to identify himself, as Karl Hockenbarger, back to camera, demonstrates Sunday. Hockenbarger, from Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kan., said the representative assaulted him.

enbarger, back to camera, demonstrates Sunday. Hockenbarger, from Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kan., said the representative assaulted him.

700 protest Focus' stance on gays



JERILEE BENNETT, THE GAZETTE

Becki Lee, left, and Rebecca Rocha came from Austin, Texas, to participate in a Soulforce rally at Focus on the Family on Sunday. Hundreds of people came from across the nation to protest what they say is James Dobson's intolerance of homosexuality.

By **DEEDEE CORRELL**
and **PERRY SWANSON**
THE GAZETTE

Focus on the Family is polluting the country with toxic lies about homosexuality, gay Christian activists charged Sunday as they rallied outside the ministry's Colorado Springs headquarters.

An estimated 700 people attended the protest, designed to challenge Focus founder James Dobson's teachings as hurtful to people struggling to reconcile their sexuality with their faith.

"He began as a wonderful family counselor," said the Rev.

Mel White, founder of Soulforce, a national gay rights group that organized the protesters. "He's become a danger to himself and the nation."

Focus officials said they welcomed the debate but haven't changed their minds about opposing gay rights and same-sex marriage.

"Focus will never change its position, because the Bible hasn't changed its position," said Focus spokeswoman Melissa Fryrear.

Also present Sunday was a group of nine protesters from the Topeka, Kan.-based West-



White

chances for water pipeline

By ED SEALOVER
THE GAZETTE

being sought on
ery.
e White, 22, is de-
a 120-pound
et 4 inches tall,
air and blue eyes.
being sought on
ft.
ave information
gatives or a seri-
Crime Stoppers
in Colorado
2-STOP in Pueblo.
ot have to give
and you could
d of as much as
ormation given
ppers.
eatured fugitives
e Pikes Peak re-
Crime Stoppers
w.crimestop.net.

Gov. Bill Owens is expected to sign a bill that indirectly will weaken Colorado Springs' hand in dealing with Pueblo County's opposition to a proposed water pipeline project.

House Bill 1063, approved by the Legislature last month, eliminates the Colorado Land Use Commission.

The commission was created in 1974 and had several duties, including the ability to review counties' 1041 regulations. Named after another state law, 1041 regulations are rules that counties can devise to regulate major construction projects planned by other counties or cities.

The regulations are typically imposed on power lines, water lines, reservoirs and similar utility projects. Pueblo County is redrafting its 1041 rules before Colorado Springs Utilities begins construction on a 43-mile pipeline north from Pueblo Reservoir.

Officials have worried about Pueblo County crafting some of the toughest 1041 regulations ever to try to stop the pipeline, which is opposed by some business leaders there.

If that happens — Pueblo County is expected to release a draft of its 1041 rules in the next two months — the utility could have argued its case to the Land Use Commission.

But with the commission set to go out of existence, no state agency will have a say over proposed 1041 rules. Mike Beas-

OPPOSING VIEWS



Bill Owens:
Governor plans to sign bill to kill the Land Use Commission.



Phil Tollefson:
Utilities CEO thinks panel provided needed check, balance.

ley, executive director of the Department of Local Affairs, said the governor plans to sign the bill as soon as it hits his desk.

Colorado Springs Utilities chief executive Phil Tollefson noted that the commission was advisory in nature and could not have stopped 1041 rules that counties put forward. But the nine-member board at least was able to weigh in if there were questionable rules.

"They weren't perfect, but something was better than nothing," Tollefson said. "We continue to believe that some kind of balance or check, if you will, at the state level is a necessary mechanism."

Owens stopped appointing members to the commission in 1999, believing it was a pointless extra layer of bureaucracy. But

a Boulder County judge ruled last year that a land-use matter involving the University of Colorado had to go to the commission, so it was hastily reassembled in January.

After a meeting in which the commission took no issue with Boulder County's 1041 rules, Beasley led the charge to have it eliminated. The bill should reach the governor in May.

If the city-owned utility objects to whatever rules Pueblo County proposes, officials can show up at public hearings and ask for them to be changed. If that doesn't work, they can take the county to court.

Eagle County used stringent 1041 regulations to delay construction of the utility's proposed Homestake II reservoir project in the late 1980s. As the utility fought those rules, cheaper ways to convey water to the city shelved that project.

Colorado Springs does not have a viable long-term option other than the pipeline, known as the Southern Delivery System. It is expected to increase daily water intake by 50 percent and, combined with a proposed reservoir expansion, provide for Colorado Springs' water needs through 2040.

Pueblo County Attorney Ray Kogovsek said in an interview late last year that officials are not trying to shut down the project. Still, Colorado Springs leaders remain nervous.

CONTACT THE WRITER: 636-0184 or
sealover@gazette.com

Perkins Max **FACTORY ALTERNATIVES**

Your Alternative To High Prices

Jeep & Dodge Parts/Accessories

Brandware Bikerware

380-TMAX (719-380-8629)
www.factoryalternatives.com

Max
Celebrating 10th Anniversary

1219 N. Academy (just North of The Citadel)

SON'S ARREST: Mom never spoke of problems

FROM PAGE 1

the late 1970s with her former husband, Dan DeGeare, a dentist. Records show they divorced in 1991. They had a second son, Adin, who was a year ahead of Nathaniel in school.

Nathaniel DeGeare graduated from Cheyenne Mountain High School in 1995. Memberships included the National Honor Society, track team and choir.

A message in the 1995 high school yearbook featured his baby picture and this message: "Nathan, you have been a constant source of pride and enjoyment. Love, Mom and

and nice. She'd walk through the neighborhood and wave. It's a shocker."

The death affected Rocks' son, Nathaniel, 10.

"It's kind of disturbing," the boy said. "I can see the house from my window."

Gwen DeGeare worked in sales in the 1990s for Bryan and Scott Jewelers.

"She was a very pleasant woman," owner Roberto Agnolini said. "I knew she had difficulty every once in a while with the younger boy, but never to that extent."

Agnolini said she quit because of family obligations after her mother moved here

ING
PCY?
ANCE

Discuss your
passed a
ur ability to

harder to
aturday, March 12



JERILEE BENNETT, THE GAZETTE

Members of the Colorado Springs Police Department stand Sunday at the entrance to Focus on the Family as Soulforce marchers carry a casket filled with letters for founder James Dobson.

PROTESTS: 140 officers on hand report no arrests or problems

FROM PAGE 1

boro Baptist Church, who protested Soulforce and Focus, the latter for not sufficiently condemning gays.

Their neon-colored "God Hates Fags" signs dueled for attention, but Colorado Springs police kept the Westboro protesters at a distance from the Soulforce group, which had a permit to close Explorer Drive in front of Focus.

About 140 officers were on hand Sunday but reported no arrests or problems.

Soulforce supporters said they are tired of some Christians claiming a moral high ground on gay issues.

"I'm here with my mother and father who love me and accept me as I am," said Jacob Reitan, 23, of Eden Prairie, Minn.

But others don't experience that support, thanks to Focus's teachings that turn parents against their children, he said.

That, in turn, leads to a sense of isolation and depression that causes some to take their lives, White said. He described a suicide note by a man who wrote: "I don't know how else to fix this."

The suicide rate among gay teens is three times greater among gay teens than among straight teens, according to Soulforce.

The causes of suicide are often complex, Fryrear said. She said Focus urges parents to love their gay and lesbian children without condoning

their sexual orientation.

Homosexuality is a mental disorder and can be cured, said Tom Minnery, vice president for public policy at Focus.

"It's a psychological issue, rooted mostly in early childhood," he said. "But thousands have come out of it."

Minnery said Focus has more of a disagreement with the representatives of Westboro than they do with Soulforce.

"Oh yeah, they're nasty people," he said.

In addition to protesting near Focus, nine members of the Westboro Baptist Church also held protests at Colorado Springs churches Saturday and Sunday, telling parishioners to "go to hell" and drawing responses that ranged from aggression to mockery.

The protesters mainly focused on their belief that homosexuality is sinful. They accused members of other churches of supporting gays and called their churches "whorehouses." At St. Mary's Cathedral, they celebrated the death of Pope John Paul II.

The Westboro group plans to picket today at Palmer High School, City Hall and several other places.

Sunday's ideological debate outside Focus on the Family didn't thwart Colorado Springs' consumer bent Sunday. Shoppers flowed easily into the nearby Shops at Briargate.

Police said they set up protester parking on the closed section of Explorer Drive to ensure that spots at the mall

could be saved for customers. The Shops at Briargate and surrounding businesses did beef up security for the event, but no problems were reported.

In nearby neighborhoods, most people seemed more concerned with staying warm than the protests. Some said they didn't know about the demonstration, and those who did shrugged it off as an issue that doesn't affect them.

"Frankly, it's none of my business," said Charlie Freeman, who lives in Pine Creek Village. "I have some strong traditional values, but my take is, we all need to get along."

The Soulforce demonstration had the support of the Pikes Peak Gay and Lesbian Community Center, whose volunteers helped staff the rally. Executive director Linda Devocelle said the center's employees will not participate in today's planned civil disobedience.

Soulforce plans to return to Focus this morning to deliver about 1,000 letters written by gays describing how Dobson's teachings have adversely affected them. Focus employees will be at work, but the ministry will not be open for public tours.

Soulforce members have pledged nonviolent civil disobedience if they're not allowed inside.

Staff writers Pam Zubeck, Jane Reuter and Tom Roeder contributed to this report.

A nationally known advocate for wild horses still believes Indian tribes can play an important role in saving the West's mustangs despite the slaughter of 41 horses last week that were under the care of a South Dakota tribe.

The Interior Department and a subsidiary agency responsible for managing wild horses, the Bureau of Land Management, have been struggling with a new law that requires the older wild horses be commercially sold. At the same time, the agencies are expected to prevent the wholesale slaughter of more than 8,000 older mustangs held at government sanctuaries.

Agency officials, with the encouragement of wild horse advocates, thought they had found a partial solution when they recently announced the sale of more than 500 wild horses to two tribes. But those sales and all others were

and earlier deaths of six others housed in Cañon City — violated a federal contract requiring them to be treated humanely.

The horses sent to an Illinois slaughterhouse last week came from a broker who obtained them from the Rosebud Sioux Tribe of South Dakota. The tribe traded 87 of the 105 aging horses it bought for \$1 each from the government for younger ones.

The Interior Department also is investigating last month's sale of six wild horses from a BLM corral in Cañon City to an Oklahoma man who promised they would be used in a program for troubled youths. Instead, the man took the horses to slaughter at the Cavel International Inc. packing plant in De Kalb, Ill.

"It is tragic and disappointing about the Rosebud Sioux," said Karen Sussman, president of the

and look at the positives, tion of wild horse sale BLM looking at how those sales."

The BLM has determined public land it manages contain the 37,000 wild h burros that roam 10 states. In the past 20 years removed thousands of h public land, and 9,000 n follow in the next couple

The BLM has long h cessful adoption pro younger horses, but it placing older horses in ernment-funded sanctu cost of about \$20 million

The new law, inserted year's federal budget b tana Sen. Conrad Burns the BLM to sell those h law does not prevent t the horses to slaughter the BLM has been tryi

Colorado delegation divided on commercial sale of wild horses

By BILL McKEOWN
THE GAZETTE

Members of Colorado's congressional delegation have mixed views about efforts to restore a ban on the commercial sale of older wild horses.

A survey of the delegation last week revealed that only Rep. Mark Udall, a Democrat from Boulder, supports legislation to restore protection for wild horses removed this year by a budget rider sponsored by a Montana senator.

Udall is one of 49 co-sponsors of House Bill 297, which would re-

store the ban on the commercial sale and slaughter of wild horses and burros. The bill's sponsor, Rep. Nick Rahall, D-W.Va., hopes to get 100 co-sponsors before debating the bill on the House floor.

Udall believes wild horses are part of the environment of the West and should be managed humanely, his press secretary said. The congressman believes the horses' numbers must be managed but thinks voluntary cooperation between the BLM, livestock producers and wild horse advocates is the best way to do that.

Rep. Joel Hefley, a Colorado

Springs Republican, was one of those co-sponsors. His retary, Kim Sears, said, "I'm a horse owner and sympathize with the plight of wild horses." Hefley believes Rahall's bill is an emotional, not logical, response.

She said Hefley believes land officials need a way to deal with sick and older horses, but that public lands can support a large number of the animals. The Land Management should be allowed to sell excess horses. Hefley should monitor that the sale is humane, Hefley believes.

Rep. Bob Beauprez,

BRIEFLY

Ute Mountain tribal chairman arrested

TOWAOC • A judge has placed Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Chairman Selwyn Whiteskunk under a restraining order after allegations he hurled a coffee table at his wife and pushed aside his son when the boy tried to defend his mother.

No one was hurt, Bureau of Indian Affairs police said.

Police arrested Whiteskunk, 41, on suspicion of a domestic-violence violation and endangering the welfare of a minor after a report of a disturbance at his home Thursday, the bureau said.

Whiteskunk was released Friday and faces a court hearing. He was barred from ha-

The clerk was treated at a hospital.

Night watchman shoots motorist

A motorist knocking over traffic cones in a construction zone was shot by a night watchman early Sunday in Pueblo.

Police said the man, whose name was not released, was knocking over cones with his Toyota truck at the south end

of Lake Avenue in Pueblo about 2:25 a.m.

After getting out of the car, he allegedly came at the night watchman with an open knife.

The watchman, whose name was also not released, reportedly told the man with the knife to "get back" several times, then fired one shot into the upper chest.

He was taken to Saint Mary Corwin Medical Center, where he was in critical condition, police said.

THE GAZETTE AND NEWS SERVICES

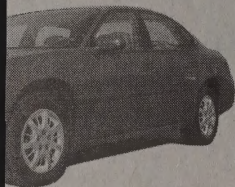
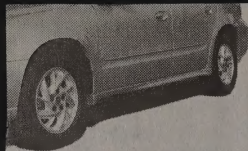
WE PURSUE PERFECTION...
YOU PURSUE LIVING

RALLY PUTS FOCUS ON GAYS

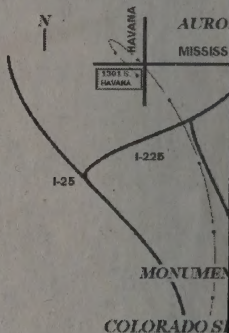
Bonnie Tinker holds a sign expressing her point of view during a Soulforce rally at Focus on the Family headquarters Sunday. Hundreds of people came from across the nation to protest James Dobson's stance on gay relationships. **Story, Metro**



JERILEE BENNETT, THE GAZETTE



selling more used cars than any
Colorado. The Suss Pontiac-GM
Superstore in Aurora. Where car
friends.



From the Colorado S
area, take I-25 or High
to I-225 north.

Exit on Mississip
go west to Havana S
then south (left) one

Suss Pontiac
Supersto